

Born to Win

Unholy Terror #2

by Ronald L. Dart

[In this special edition of the Born to Win program, Christian Educational Ministries presents part two of Unholy Terror—a program recorded in 1998 and most relevant today. Ronald L. Dart reviews the history of the religion of Islam and explains what its modern adherents want from the world.]

Every time an airliner goes down, the first thing we want to know is: Was it a bomb? You can visualize the press conference. Here are the people trying to explain what's happened this airliner. And there'd be a reporter somewhere on the first row, second row—up goes his hand, up comes his body, and he says, “Was it a bomb?” And then, if it wasn't a bomb, “Was it a missile?”, and, of course, the unsaid question, “Was it an Arab terrorist that caused the crash?”

I think it's fair to say that the Islamic fundamentalists in this world have gotten our attention. But who are these people and what are they want and why are they mad at us? Gerald Sieb, writing in *The Wall Street Journal* sounded a warning. He said:

The U.S is a target. Not because of something it has or hasn't done, but simply because it exists.

He's right, but not many people understand that, and even fewer seem to understand why it would be so. On this program we've been talking about the Arab people, about their religion, and why it is that we are on a collision course with some of those people. In the West, we're accustomed to separating religion and politics—religion is over here, politics is over there. They're two different parts of our lives. Our job is here; our religion is there. It's segregated out, as it were. It's compartmentalized. Some people even seem a little offended by the idea that religious people should attempt to exercise influence in the political arena. “Keep your church out of politics”, they say. The separation of Church and State are fundamental values in our constitutional system. Islam is *not like that at all*. Islam draws no distinction between the religious and the temporal areas of life. And, therefore, the Islamic State is by definition a *religious* state. Hard to get your mind around, isn't it, when you're used to living in a secular state in which religion is *out there somewhere* to think in terms of a religious state.

Now, Muslims in general do not believe that men can be made righteous by moral example or intellectual persuasion. They consider that *force* may also be necessary. Classical Islamic doctrine holds that the world is divisible into three parts: the zone of Islam, the zone of peace (that is, those nations with whom Muslims have peace treaties), and the zone of war. That's the rest of the world... which includes us. We're in the zone of war. Most of us have heard the word *jihad*, but not that many understand precisely what it means. Jihad is the holy struggle of Islam to gain political control over the affairs of society. They intend to run society in accordance with the principles of Islamic law. And so when you see newsreels and documentaries showing women in an Islamic society wearing black robes down to their feet, this is not merely an expression of *deep piety* on the part of the women. It is a matter of Islamic law, and in some countries of the world it is *strictly* enforced.

In the Western Christian world, we have the idea that conversion of an individual takes place when he hears preaching, he hears truth, he is persuaded intellectually, and he *comes to believe*. This is not the way Muslims approach it. They believe that even force may be necessary. Individual conversions are expected to occur as a *byproduct* as the power structure passes into the hands of the Muslim community. In other words, we create a Muslim *society*, and you *conform* to that society. Now, in the original ideas of Islam, conversion by force was forbidden. But this didn't keep Arab warriors from offering pagans the option: Accept Islam or die. It was one of history's most effective missionary techniques.

What we as Christians, I think, fail to understand about Islam is that it's concerned with regulating not only man's relationship with God through his conscience, but with regulating human relationships in society, as well. And, therefore, there can be not only an Islamic *church* but Islamic *law*, Islamic *state*, Islamic *government*. The dual religious and social character of Islam sees itself as commissioned *by God* to bring its own value system *to the world* through the jihad. In Christian doctrine, it was through the foolishness of preaching that God would save those who believe, and we were to take the good news of Jesus Christ into the world, and anyone who believes on him would be saved. Not Islam. Islam takes its gospel to the world through a holy war. And we, dear friends, are a part of the "rest of the world" which is the object of jihad. It's impossible to make peace with jihad. You can't negotiate a settlement. You submit or you die. Of course, you can fight—and sometimes you can even win a battle here or there—but they never go away. This war has been going on one way or another for nearly 1,400 years. Only now, the terrorists are acquiring methods of *mass destruction*. It's strange, isn't it, to think that a gang of rogue Arabs training in Afghanistan should have as their object the conquering of the world for Islam. But they nearly did it once before, and they think they can do it again

Before I go on, I want to point out that the majority of the people that adhere to the doctrine of Islam (and certainly the people who might be in a mosque in your own city)... they are very normal people. They are kind; they are gentle; they are hospitable. And you would really not find yourself in serious disagreement with *most* of the doctrines of Islam. The problem is not with these people. It's with a very small sect of Islam, and even, really, a splinter group within some of those sects who are the *truly dangerous* men. It was, I think, Norman Schwarzkopf who said not long ago that they're particularly dangerous, these people, not because they are especially highly intelligent or able—they're normal in that regard. They are dangerous because they don't mind killing women and children and because they don't mind dying themselves. That's what makes them dangerous. Otherwise, they show no special levels of competency. After all, *anyone* can learn to make a bomb.

Mohammed died in AD 632—not that long. He was converted and got his first vision in 610 and died in 632. After he died, his successors carried out jihad with a real vengeance. Within 100 years, Arab armies had overrun Spain, conquered *all* of northern Africa, advanced to Kashgar in Central Asia, and had gone all the way to Sindh and Multan in India. That was the Arab Empire. As they went, Christians and Jews—whom they considered "people of the Book"—were allowed to retain their religion but required to pay a tax. All others were given a choice: Accept Islam or die.

It's really hard for the modern general or the modern person to understand how a few Arabs from somewhere near Medina could perform a feat like this. And, in fact, the world the Arabs conquered didn't understand it, either. Historian [and General] John Glubb, when he was writing about this period, said:

Prisoners of war brought to Medina expected to see palaces and imperial pageantry such as they had witnessed in Constantinople or Ctesiphon. Instead, in the glaring, dusty square of a little mud brick town, they would find a circle of Arabs sitting on the ground. One of them—a tall, lean man, barefooted, and wearing a coarse woolen cloak—would prove to be the world's most powerful emperor.

He was Umar ibn Al-Khattab. He may have been the greatest of all the caliphs. Glubb remarks that:

In spite of (or perhaps because of) his humility and his profound piety, his word was law from one end of the empire to the other.

And what an empire it was! God had promised Abraham that the descendants of Ishmael—the son of Abraham—would be a great nation. And as it turned out, the Arab empire that followed in the late 600s and early 700s and beyond, was one of the greatest empires the world has ever seen...and one of the least understood. For 500 years after the death of Muhammad, the Arab Empire and its Islamic descendants *dominated the world*. The Mediterranean was an Islamic lake. Europe was barred from trade with the rest of the world. You may have learned in school about the Dark Ages in Europe, but did you learn that it was the *power of Islam* that locked Europe into the Dark Ages?

We grow up thinking that these Islamic hordes were barbarians; they were camel drivers; they ran through the desert on their camels, waving their swords in the air, screaming “Allahu Akbar!”, yet while Europe was in poverty and ignorance, the Arabs were establishing great libraries and centers of learning. It was the Arabs who preserved the great works of the cultures of Greece and Rome. While Catholic monks were locking away the thinking of ancient minds and destroying them, Arab scholars were translating them and making them available for study. There were many works from the ancient Greek world, that were lost *totally* in the original, that were translated into Latin from Arabic and finally preserved to the modern generation. But it was Arab scholars, not European scholars, who preserved them for us.

We were all taught the difference between Arabic and Roman numerals when we were growing up, but we may not have been told that the decimal system, logarithms, algebra, and trigonometry are a legacy of *Arab* scholars. How many people know that in medical treatment, botany, geography, natural history, zoology, the Arabs were *centuries* ahead of Europe. The Arabs were superior in the manufacture of textiles, silk, embroideries, glassware, weapons, metalwork. In all these things, the Arabs were the link with the past.

But they made their own unique contributions as well. They introduced, out of a long poetic tradition, rhyming verse that was unknown to the Greeks and Romans before them. They brought west the Arab idea of honor, and their code of chivalry was adopted and retained for centuries by the Spaniards who were great fighters in their own right. The objective of these robed and bearded desert Arabs was to build an empire, and the objective of *these* robed and bearded desert Arabs, who train in camps in Afghanistan and elsewhere in the world, is to build the *same* empire all over again—only bigger and greater this time. And the West—from Europe to England to America—is a primary obstacle to their plans. They see us as propping up the governments of Egypt and Saudi Arabia. And these two nations stand in the way of uniting a New Arab Empire. The Islamic fundamentalists see the moderate Arabs—especially those who allow a secular state to exist—as major roadblocks, and they believe that if they can capture the governments of Egypt and Saudi Arabia, the rest of the Islamic world will fall into their hands like ripe fruit from the tree. And that would give to an Islamic empire control of most of the world’s oil. Will they succeed? You know, there are reasons from the Bible to believe that they just might.

Where are these people mentioned in the Bible? We discussed in the last program the origins of the Arab people. They are the Ishmaelites; they are the descendants of one of the sons of Abraham. And Abraham was promised that Ishmael would be great—that a great nation would come out of him. Now, if these people are going to be major players at the end of the age, then they ought to be found *somewhere* in those prophecies in the Bible that deal with the time of the end. And, in fact, they are. When you begin to search through the prophets, you find them all over the place. To Isaiah, they are the “Arabians”. But in the Islamic world, there are *other* families that are involved in this. They are

families like Edom, Moab, and Ammon. Moab and Ammon were the children of Lot, Abraham's nephew. They settled just across the Jordan River from Israel, and so, consequently, Moab and Ammon long ago were absorbed into the Arab Empire. And Moab, Ammon, Edom all figure prominently in Isaiah's prophecies.

Damascus in chapter 17—the capital of Syria—is Islamic. Egypt—chapter 19—obviously, mostly Islamic although the government is secular. These prophecies find both historical *and* future fulfillment right out of the Book of Isaiah. All of them, discussed by Isaiah, are the Islamic peoples today. Ezekiel, another prophet, speaks of Edom and Moab in his prophecies of the end time. He adds Persia, Libya, Lud, and Phut—which takes in middle Asia and North Africa, all of it. In chapter 30, he speaks of the fall of the nations of North Africa—including Egypt—in the time of the Day of the Lord. And any student of prophecy knows the “Day of the Lord” is a clear reference to the end time. All the nations across North Africa—Islamic. All the nations of middle Asia—Islamic. Persia is what we now today call Iran, and it seems to be very much a seat of modern Islamic fundamentalism. It certainly is an Islamic state.

In the 38th chapter of Ezekiel, Gog and Magog (who many identify with parts of the former Soviet Union) are linked with Persia and other Islamic peoples. And a lot of people in this country never knew that many of those former Soviet republics in the south were *Islamic* peoples. Jeremiah the prophet speaks of Sheba (which is probably the area of modern Yemen), Egypt, Edom, Ammon, Arabia, Moab, and others. Then when you go to the Minor Prophets there are references to Gaza (which is in the news nearly every day, it seems like), Edom (out of the Book of Amos). Malachi mentions them: Ammon, Edom, Egypt. In fact, they really get around to mentioning, sooner or later, all the Islamic peoples in the modern world.

Why do these people figure so *hugely* in end time prophecies? Well, the cheap answer is that they are the neighbors of Israel, and they were the people that Israel was having trouble with at the time, and those are the nations that the prophets saw and spoke about. Fine, that's well and true and good enough. But when it gets transferred down toward the end time, and you realize that you're playing in terms of geopolitics, why are they *still* a factor? These are questions that students of the Bible and prophecy and current events have to answer. Then there's the prophet Daniel.

Daniel's prophecies are way too complex for me to detail here (I hope maybe, some time, to do it in another series) but chapter 11 is a *crucial* prophecy that, in spite of typical fulfillment in the 2nd century, is *explicitly* for the end time. Now, if you go and study your commentaries (and you really should), if you go and study the history of the time, you'll learn about Alexander the Great; you'll learn about his death and the division of his kingdom under four different generals; and you'll learn that two of them, in particular—one in Egypt and one in Syria—become the “King of the North” and the “King of the South” in Daniel's prophecy. The problem is that Jesus makes it very plain, in his prophecies, that the prophecies of Daniel 11 are aimed primarily at the *time of the end*. Even the famous “Abomination of Desolation”—which took place *in history*—Jesus seems to be pointing ahead to the end time for that abomination to appear. Now, there's a familiar passage in Daniel 11. It begins in verse 40. You may have heard it.

Daniel 11

AKJV

⁴⁰ And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.

⁴¹ He shall enter also into the glorious land [*Palestine, of course.*], and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.

⁴² He shall stretch forth his hand also on the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape.

Now, as I said, I'll try to develop Daniel's prophecies in another program [*The Book of Daniel series*], but many believe that the end-time King of the North is a *European* power, while the King of the South is an *Islamic* power. And the fact that this King of the North invades Egypt suggests that, by that time, Egypt has become part of the Islamic power base. Now, one thing that's interesting about this prophecy is that, when this overflowing power comes rolling into the Middle East, Edom, Moab and Ammon escape. Now, historically, Edom, Moab, and Ammon live straight across the Jordan River from Israel. They were not a particularly powerful people, and they still aren't. They are certainly a *nuisance* to the Israelis, but they are hardly a major part of any power base in the world. And one wonders why it is that "most" of the children of Ammon escaped while not all of them. The answer may well be that many of the children of Ammon actually live on *this* side of Jordan—in Israel—and they don't escape whenever this overflowing power comes into the Middle East.

Now, the question is: How could an Islamic power like this threaten Europe? In a word, *oil*. Europe is even more dependent on the Middle East than we are, and that's why Europe—Germany, in particular—have been so helpful to Arab countries in the past. I can assure you this has nothing to do with their religion or their culture. They want to maintain their relationships in the Arab world because they know they have to depend on them for oil. But...you could make a giant miscalculation if you think your relationships with the Arab world can be controlled or based or carried out entirely on the basis of commodities and trade and money. It will work fine as long as the prevailing power structure stays. But if Saudi Arabia should fall to Islamic fundamentalists; if Egypt should fall to Islamic fundamentalists; then the whole power structure in the Middle East has been changed and the new order in the Arab world will not merely be after money. They will not merely be after those things that they *seem* to have been after in the past in all the previous oil embargoes and so forth. They will not be merely after getting us to stop supporting Israel. It will be time for *jihad*, and Europe, England, Canada, the United States—in fact, *the rest of the world*—is their objective.

So get the picture: Saudi Arabia, all by themselves, sit on about 25% percent of the world's known oil reserves. Couple in all the remaining Islamic states that have oil reserves and it becomes quickly apparent that the followers of Mohammad could bring the world *to its knees* with oil and nothing else. All they have to do is turn off the taps. Now, the rich sheiks of Saudi Arabia aren't going to do that, but if they are killed and replaced by the imams of Iran—who don't care about money, but who *care* about Islam and about spreading *Islamic* power to the world; to convert the world to Allah—what then? It seems very obvious to me that the King of the South will, at the end time, be an Islamic power. But *which* Islamic power?

Bear in mind that Islam is essentially an Arabic religion that was imposed on much of the Islamic world by the force of arms. The *fierce* and turbulent individualism of the Arabs resulted in continuous infighting. Any weakness by an opponent was seized upon by potential opponents and war followed. In all the process of time, this individualism led not only to war, but to Islam's own version of sectarianism. In Islam, as in Christianity, there are left-wingers and right-wingers, radicals and moderates, fundamentalists and liberals, traditionalists and moderates. The individualism and sectarianism of Islam may have saved the world from Islamic domination. John Glubb said the various Arabic-speaking peoples have never been united except by force. But he also observes that the great majority of Arabs, even today, are in their heart of hearts more emotionally loyal to Islam than to any national feeling.

A lot of people are worried today about a resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism. By now, everyone knows about the ancient Shi'ite sect. They originated way back in the 7th century. It was originally a political movement, but over time they developed a theological message to go with it. The political ruler of Shi'ism—the Imam—became a manifestation of God and the primordial light that sustains the universe and bestows *true knowledge* on man. The Imam alone can convey the hidden and true meaning of the Koran, and the Imam alone is infallible. Folks, this is a *large, powerful* Islamic sect, and their greatest enemies are *other* Muslims who do not agree with them. There are 30 million Shi'ite Muslims in the world. Relatively few of them are Arabs; they are mostly Persian and other Central

Asian stock. Fully 90% of the population of Iran are Shi'ites. But what disturbs many observers is: the Shi'ites are gaining ground and compose a significant minority among Muslims in the *Arabian Peninsula*.

Now, if you understand all this, you can understand why the Western powers were willing to leave Saddam Hussein in power in Iraq and why the United States, right now, isn't prepared to wipe him out. That dictator formed a barrier in that part of the world against the *even-more-radical* fundamentalists. Right now, the more moderate Islamic leaders are in power—but “moderate” is a relative term. The moderate Sunni sect of Muslims is dominant in Saudi Arabia and, there, alcohol is banned; drinkers are flogged; adulterers are stoned; and thieves have their hands cut off. That's moderation.

In the Middle East, there is too much oil, too much money, too much power, too much pride, and *too much religion*. Sooner or later *something* has to explode. For years, Westerners have worried about what could happen if some of those fanatics got a hold of a nuclear device. It wouldn't matter if it couldn't be delivered effectively; they could blow *themselves* up and still precipitate a major disaster.

Europeans and Americans do not understand the Arab people *or* their religion (Probably because they do not *care* to understand) but the Islamic peoples are destined to affect your life in ways you *cannot imagine*, and the failure to understand a people who are positioned to give the world *so much grief* is a formula for disaster. The sword of Islam has never remained sheathed for long.

Until next time, this is Ronald Dart reminding you: Keep your eyes open.

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